
****BO TALES****

Vol.3 No. 2

The Newsletter of the Original Hobo Nickel Society

July 1994

OHNS AUCTION TO BE HELD AT FUN SHOW



LOT #1 (R-039)

A relatively rare combination of carved outlines, punched hair, and dimpled field design. The fag (hobo jargon for cigarette butt) is occasionally used as a device on hobo carvings. This coin was used as one of the cover photos of the original hobo nickel book, and is also pictured on page 45 in the book.



LOT #2 (R-040)

A delicately totally hand carved art work which displays the use of the broad tipped flat chisel for carving the feathers. Most broad tipped flat chisel work was accomplished by "BO" between about 1960-63. The small ornate feathers on the head band were made with a narrow tipped flat chisel. This coin is pictured on page 92 in the original hobo nickel book.

30 original hobo nickels from Bill Fivaz's personal collection will be auctioned at the OHNS meeting on **Sat, Jan 7th at the FUN Show in Orlando, FL.** The exact time and room will be announced later. A large percentage of the lots are works done by Bo or Bert. Most of the lots are of very high quality, many exhibiting "raised" or "pushed" metal features. Each has been certified and registered as an original by OHNS (Del Romanes). The registration form and photo will accompany each lot sold. Mail and floor bids will only be accepted from **paid-up members of OHNS.** (See application on back page). An auction catalog is being prepared. More information on the auction will be in the next issue.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer 1994

Dallas "Colonel" Shaw

Here it is the first of July already! It seems just a couple of weeks ago that I was writing this column for the Spring Edition of *Bo Tales*. It may be my imagination, but I do feel that the older you get, the faster time flies.

Speaking of July, if you have not done so already, you can still contact James Taylor, the ANA's Educational Director and our very own treasurer and reserve a seat at the ANA's 26th Annual Summer Conference that will be conducted July 9-15, 1994. This a superb opportunity to increase your knowledge in a specific numismatic area of interest through classes taught by acknowledged experts in their fields. You'll also have the opportunity to make many new friends among your fellow numismatists. This year's offerings include 13 courses covering a broad range of numismatic interests. In addition, this year includes an optional Western States National Parks tour led by James Taylor immediately after the conclusion of the Summer Conference. So, don't let this numismatic opportunity pass you by.

Most of you know by now that the upcoming annual meeting of the Original Hobo Nickel Society during the 1995 FUN Convention in Orlando will feature an auction of 30 original hobo nickels from the collection of Bill Fivaz. Several of the pieces are works of "Bert" and "Bo." This once in a lifetime opportunity to acquire some rare and unique coins is only available to paid up members of the Society. Bill passed on using a national auction house--and probably much bigger bucks--in order to use the forum of the annual meeting as the auction site as a special benefit for Society members and, also, as an opportunity to attract more new members to the Society. Bill will also be donating 10% of the hammer prices realized to the Society. This act of generosity typifies his conduct as a numismatist who is always willing to share material and knowledge with others. We all owe Bill a special vote of thanks. The Society is indeed fortunate to have him as a member.

Speaking of new members, we are doing quite well in this regard, but we could do better. In my first column, I voiced the opinion that we need 300 members in order to survive and thrive. I still believe that and we're still short of that goal. I

asked each of you to set a personal goal of obtaining one new member of the Society. Many of you have done that--and more. For those of you that have not, please see if you can convince just one of your numismatic friends to sign up. It's really not too hard to do and it will help the Society a great deal. Another source of membership is charter memberships for individual clubs. If your coin club is not a member, ask it to join. Each member club is an excellent source of new individual members.

Another special event that will occur in July is the 85th birthday of one of our members. James B. "Toby" O'Farrell will reach that milestone on July 10th. Toby remembers well the hobos and the hobo camps during the late 1920's and early 1930's. He might well have become a "knight of the road" himself had he not been fortunate enough to land a great job during those difficult times. This particular "great" job entailed hours of 7:00 am to 7:00 pm daily with every other Sunday afternoon off and paid \$10.00 per week. Times have certainly changed. Toby says, "To heck with the good old days, they weren't good at all." Toby is a bit more prosperous these days and will celebrate his birthday with a trip to Guam to join his Seabees buddies for a 50th reunion in late July. We wish him many more.

Your Board of Directors has decided to publish *Bo Tales* four times a year--January, April, July and September. This will increase the pressure on our hard working editor and he needs all the support we can give him. In order to do the 4x publication schedule, he will need 12 articles relating to hobo nickels per year. While we are blessed with hobo expertise on our board, 12 articles per year is a pretty big order for such a small group. In order to pull it off, we need your help. These articles can include technical ones dealing with hobo nickels, as well as human interest articles dealing with hobos. Now's your chance to get published in a national publication.

July also brings the ANA's 103th anniversary Convention in Detroit, Mich, scheduled for July 27-31. There is a possibility that we will set up a table for the Society. If we do, and should you make it to Detroit, be sure and stop by. We should have some dynamite hobo nickels on display.

MODERN FAKERY CAN BE DETECTED

By Del "Slickrock" Romines, NLG

Over the past 13 years, several thousands of Hobo nickels, fake Hobo nickels and neo-bos have been carefully inspected. During the inspections, numerous methods were used, and several different tests were conducted. Study and tests did not just include comparing what was thought to be genuine coins with the fakes and neo-bos, but went into testing of many types of metals to include actions and reactions. The action and reaction tests and studies involved various metals which are used in the U.S. minting system. Several different heat and acid tests (fake toning) were conducted, numerous cutting, scraping, punching, sanding, vacu-blasting, and several metal alteration tests were conducted to gain information on metal appearance over years.

This information did not come about as a "Hobo Nickel" study, but as part of my job in the metal-working industry spanning over several years. During this period, I also ran a one-man minting operation for a U.S. Government installation, and was able to not only put past knowledge to use, but learn even more about actions and reactions of metals. The total information can not be given here, but is gradually being consolidated into book. This background gives me experience which enables me to determine the fakes from the genuine by examination of the metal.

Since the OHNS was formed, I have received several hundred coins which people wanted to sell. Of these, less than 50 have been genuine, and the remainder were returned to the owners. Some friends have stopped by with their collections for assistance, and as much as 75% of some collections are either fakes or neo-bos.

As an authenticator for OHNS, I have also had coins sent to me which are either fakes, neo-bos, or neo-bos with fakery to deceive the collector. Included are two photographs which may assist you in determining which coins are genuine, and which are otherwise.



Photo #1 Vacu-Blast

According to tone and texture, the vacu-blasted coin (vacu-blasting is a form of grit blasting, but with much less air pressure, and a much finer grit) was probably accomplished within the past five years or less. The tell-tale marks on this type coin are basic marks for both the blasted coins, and for cast coins. Under 3X - 10X magnification, the texture of the coin appears to have thousands of very small pock marks for the blasted coins. The blasting actually beats small dents into the coin surface, and obliterates freshly carved surfaces.

(continued on next page)

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On a cast coin, the same general appearance can be seen under the same magnification, but the small pocks are actually pores instead of dents. Both the vacu-blasted and cast fakes usually have somewhat of a dull, semi-frosty appearance.



Photo #2 Extraneous Material

Many fake carvings are camouflaged with gunk which ranges anywhere from axle grease, dirty motor oil, cooking oil and cigarette ashes, oils applied and the coins baked in an oven, to magic markers. Photo #2 is of a very recent fake which was crudely accomplished, and extraneous material applied to try to hide the recent metal removal and fakery. To assist in the study of normal extraneous materials which should be found on circulated hobo nickels, any type of circulated nickels can be studied. Check the texture of the extraneous materials and become familiar with tone and texture. In most cases, if there is any shine to the material, it is probably recent, and would indicate fakery.

One last point on original coin determination. If a dealer or collector wants to sell you an "original Hobo Nickel", ask if he/she will give you full return privileges and pay for the authentication in the event that your coins are determined by the OHNS authenticator to be either fakes or neo-bos. You will be surprised at how many of these people will not agree to the latter, but will agree to a return.

You have an inexpensive authentication

service at your disposal, use it and save a lot!

The following article was taken from the Bantam Book "Education of a Wandering Man," Chapter two, pages 10 - 12. Thanks to Vicken Yegparian, M#J29, for submitting it.

Education of a Wandering Man

by Louis L'Amour

I had skinned dead cattle in Texas, baled hay in New Mexico, worked as a roustabout with the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, and in between times had boxed a couple of exhibitions in small towns and won a few fights. I had hoboed across Texas on the Southern Pacific and shipped out to the West Indies as a seaman and, on another ship, to Liverpool and Manchester, England. Returning, I had planted fruit trees near Phoenix, worked as caretaker of a mine in the Bradshaws, and spent three very rough months "on the beach" in San Pedro.

To properly understand the situation in America before the Depression, one must realize there was a great demand for seasonal labor, and much of this was supplied by men called hoboes.

Over the years the terms applied to wanderers have been confused until all meaning has been lost. To begin with, a bum was a local man who did not want to work. A tramp was a wanderer of the same kind, but a hobo was a wandering worker and essential to the nation's economy.

In the days before the big combines it was the hobo who "shocked" the grain, picking up the bundles dropped by a binder and stacking them to be picked up by men on hayracks.

Many hoboes would start working the harvest in Texas and follow the ripening grain north through Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska into the Dakotas. During harvest season, when the demand for farm labor was great, the freight trains permitted the hoboes to ride, as the railroads were to ship the harvested grain and it was in their interest to see that labor was provided.

Often this lot of wandering workers was mixed with college boys earning enough money for school or working to get in shape for football. Some simply drifted because they enjoyed the life, the work in the open fields, the variety of towns and experiences, and the chance to see the country. By and large these harvest workers were Anglo-Saxon

and Irish, as most of the early pioneers had been, but there was a good mixture of blacks and immigrants of European extraction. Latinos were rarely seen except in the southwestern states.

The Depression brought a different kind of drifter to the railroads and highways, and only one who bridged that period can grasp the depth of the change. The Depression hoboes had little of that carefree, cheerful attitude of the earlier hobo. They were serious, often frightened men. They had come from towns where work was no longer available, and were, as we all were, seeking work. Often these men had families to whom they wrote when they could afford the postage.

The criminal element in either segment was small indeed. The fact of the matter is that poor men do not often steal, and when they do, it is petty theft, something to eat or perhaps an item of clothing to keep them from the cold.

Thieves are usually those who have something and want more. They steal not for food but for flashier clothes, a better watch, a handsome car. They steal for money to spend on flash, on women or drugs. Hungry men are without power, without leverage, and so are vulnerable to any kind of bullying and are constantly suspected of crimes they rarely commit.

The years before the Depression were the heyday of the hobo. His labor was much in demand and he, loving to wander, rarely stayed long on a job. For years there had been a surplus of labor in the United States, but it was largely unrecognized because so many were constantly shifting jobs. There were at least four or five men for every job, but with the constant turnover, some of them were working all the time; when the Depression came it was like a game of musical chairs. Those who had the jobs stayed with them, while the others were adrift in a country without work.

During the knockabout years the hobo acquired a literature of his own, stories, poetry, and songs passed on by word of mouth, only occasionally printed or recorded. Among the songs best remembered, although there were hundreds now lost, were "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum," "The Bum Song," "The Dying Hobo," "Big Rock Candy Mountain," and "The Hype Song."

The folklore of the hobo has been studied but only partly explored, and is extensive indeed. The chapters on famous hoboes, tramps, and railroad detectives have been largely overlooked because too

few of the old hoboes are left, and those who know the old stories are rare. The contemporary hobo is a different type entirely, with only a few similarities. For a short time here and there I lived a part of that growing folklore, seeing it at first hand.

Among the poems known by many were "Toledo Slim," "The Girl with the Blue Velvet Band," the well-known "Face on the Bar-room Floor," "Down in Lehigh Valley," and "The Lure of the Tropics."

One remembered quatrain is typical:

I've juggled a tray in a New York cafe.
Hopped bells in a hotel in Chi.
I've carried a pack down the B&O track,
And hopped Red Ball freights on the fly.

Another, of the same vintage:

I've clerked in Kansas City,
Sold insurance in St. Paul
Peddled books in Dallas, Texas,
And gone hungry in them all.

MORE LOT DESCRIPTIONS

Lot #11 (R-049): "Bridge Snakes" (Hobo jargon for a construction worker) are identified on hobo carvings by the hard hat which normally depicts the "air holes" in the hat. This carved and punched coin is the second best known example, and is pictured on page 46 in the original hobo book.

Lot #19 R-057) Even though a hastily (probably about one hour or less) carved coin by "Bert", it is the best known copy for the study of Bert's methods which he developed over a period of 34 years for producing carvings rapidly. This coin is pictured on page 25 in the original hobo nickel book.

Lot #9 (R-047) Relatively fine line carving lines, broad tip flat chisel lines, and brush marks indicate this carving was probably done in 1963. Probably chlorine toned in the early to mid 1970's. This coin is pictured on page 83 in the original hobo nickel book.

BO-CABULARY

by Chuck "Budda" Irwin (LM #6)

Due mainly to the constant prodding, incessant goading and endless rambling of our own Bo-ette and the fear for my well being should she be in the same class as myself during the coming ANA summer seminar, this instalment of the Dictionary of BO-isms is now under way.

This is a TU manuscript (Totally Unofficial), and any resemblance to persons, places or things can be misconstrued as purposely intentional. Please accept this author's apologies to the fine State of Georgia for the inability of two of its residents to spell Georgia Gems and Pea Cans correctly.

abode (ah-BO-da) The way J. T. Stanton describes a 2 X 4.

abolitionists (a-BO-iish-na-tist) Counterfeiters who undertake to copy an original work and attempt to sell the resulting forgery to an unsuspecting public as the real thing.

Abominable Snowman (ab-BO-mmm-in-able) First OHNS member overseas (Tibet).

Aboriginal (ab-BO ridge-a-nel) An authentic work by Bo himself.

Bimbo (Bim-BO) Hobo dream girl. (Author's favorite)

boll weevil (BO-weave-el) Young Hobo nickel collector and a member of the OHNS.

bovine (BO-vine) OHNS's answer to the money tree. Caution! Do NOT attempt to eat the fruit!

bowl (BO-el) A deep rounded eating utensil or dish used to hold Mulligan stew, among other things.

cosbology (cos-BO-ology) The branch of philosophy dealing with the origin and general structure of the Hobo Nickel with its parts, elements and expressionism with characteristics of space, time and freedom. (Art) 2. The branch that deals with the general structures and evolution. The study that enables one to become an intellectualistic onager.

Hobokin (Ho-BO-kin) Relatives.

labor (lay-BO-ore) French for "the pig" Could be a foreign piece; Example: the author's "El BO" (Spain) featured in ****BO TAILS****, Vol.2 No.3.

quotabo (quo-ta-BO) To state a price for a hobo nickel.

Rainbow (rain-BO) A beautiful original work.

Rambo (Ram-BO) Ewe know who Rambo is!

Sambo (Sam-BO) Former dairy entrepreneur now retired from the butter business bureau.

Zebo (Zzzz-BO) Zemo's (Bill Fivaz) little known brother; hates chocolate!

Little Bo Peek First women ever to be arrested for vouerisum.

BOard members Usins that is trying to educate youns.

The fruits of this seemingly insane task are derived from a family round table in which absolutely no rules were observed what-so-ever. It was a BOdacious game! One remark from yours truly and we were off. Amidst the laughter, the tears, spilt cokes and scattered goldfish crackers (laced with a few samples of Friskies cat snacks that no one discovered until a lull) someone did manage to scribble, and I do mean scribble, down some notes. The next day the hard part was the deciphering. We take great pleasure in sharing a bakers dozen plus with you. Is this a fun hobby or what!

Yours truly,
Chuck "Buddha" Irwin, (LM #6)

Thanks Budda - a little humor can go a long way! How about one on BERT as in liBERTy!

The following information should be read and followed when submitting coins for registration/certification to the Original Hobo Nickel Society

TIPS ON MAILING COINS

By Bill Fivaz (CLM #1)

Sooner or later, each of us is going to be sending some coins through the mail. They may be worth a few dollars or a few thousand, but whatever their value, you'll want to protect them in the best way possible to make certain they arrive at their destination safely and in good condition.

PACKAGING

Many valuable coins are lost in the mail as the result of improper packaging. If you're sending just a few coins, they may be housed in a "SAFE-T-MAILER," a sticky corrugated cardboard enclosure, or even placed carefully between two pieces of heavy cardboard (the back of a pad of paper works very well), and stapled shut, remembering to flatten down the staples afterward. The SAFE-T-MAILER or cardboard holder containing the coins may now be placed in a regular envelope (the heavier, the better), providing the coins are not too heavy or bulky. If this is the case, a small box, again with the coins well protected, should be used. **MAKE SURE THEY DO NOT RATTLE AROUND IN THE BOX.** Not only are coins lost through improper packaging, but even more are damaged - just because someone didn't take a little extra time to properly prepare them. Incidentally, the SAFE-T-MAILERS are available at your local coin supply house.

When using a box, make sure it is sturdy enough to withstand the trip through our postal system. It's a good idea to protect the coins by using "bubble-pack," styrofoam "peanuts," wadded up paper or some other "fill." Tape the box securely with heavy duty tape prior to wrapping with outer wrap. I've found a large Kraft paper grocery shopping bag does a very adequate job for wrapping, and you should use **BROWN KRAFT** tape (the kind you have to moisten) on the outside. You can probably find this type of tape at your local stationary store or at K-Mart. Don't skimp on the tape - too much is better

than too little. The reason for the brown Kraft tape is so the Post Office stamp can be affixed to it without smearing. Plastic tape or duct tape is not accepted by most post offices, especially for Registered Mail.

Address the package carefully, and make sure your return address is on it.

The above instructions apply to both **INSURED** and **REGISTERED/INSURED** letters and packages. It's also a good idea to **overlap** your stamps and/or Registered or Insured number sticker on your address label. In this manner, no one can place another address label **over** yours and have it sent to the address of his choice.

TYPES OF COVERAGE

INSURED, FIRST CLASS: (Note: The following figures are those in effect as of **January, 1994**.)

While the maximum coverage on Insured, First Class is now at \$600, it is suggested that any coins/valuables with a value over \$300 be sent via **REGISTERED INSURED** mail. A quick check of the rates in the two appropriate tables below will confirm that this is the prudent action to take as Registered is more secure than Insured.

The current (January, 1994) rates for Insured are:

Liability (\$)	Fee (\$)
0.01 - 50	0.75
50.01 - 100	1.60
100.01 - 200	2.40
200.01 - 300	3.50
300.01 - 400	4.60
400.01 - 500	5.40
500.01 - 600	6.20

Liability for insured mail is limited to \$600.

Insured First Class parcels are signed for by the recipient (or his/her agent upon delivery, and the Post Office retains the yellow slip. When mailing the package, the sender retains the portion of the form affixed to the package which includes the insurance number of the package, the amount for which it was insured, the date it was sent, and the

destination city. You may fill in the reverse yourself, indicating the full address and the name of the person to whom it is being sent.

Claims may be filed on lost packages after a prescribed period subsequent to mailing (usually 30 days), and the total insured amount will be recovered by the sender if the parcel is not located. **Be advised** - this takes time, often up to three months to process.

REGISTERED: This is by far the safest way to send merchandise through the postal system, although it is quite a bit more expensive (except in the \$300 - \$600 range). **You must send your coins, etc. this way if you want coverage over \$600.**

The current (January, 1994) rates for Registered/Insured are:

Liability (\$)	Fee (\$)
0.01 - 100	4.50
100.01 - 500	4.85
500.01 - 1,000	5.25
1,000.01 - 2,000	5.70
2,000.01 - 3,000	6.15
3,000.01 - 4,000	6.60
4,000.01 - 5,000	7.05
5,000.01 - 6,000	7.50

Note: Check your local Post Office for higher coverage rates and for updates on increased postage charges. **Maximum coverage for registered mail is \$25,000 per package.**

The major difference from Insured First Class is that Registered Mail is accounted for and signed for at each location along the way to the recipient. Postal employees are, therefore, a good deal more conscientious when handling Registered Mail because they are held accountable for it by way of their signature. Any lost article can be traced to the point where the receipt signature ceased.

Again, the recipient signs a yellow slip upon receipt and the Post Office retains the form. The receipt the sender keeps at the time he/she mails the package is much more complete than the Insured one. It lists full addresses of both the sender and the recipient, the Registry number of the parcel, the total cost breakdown including the amount it is registered for,

and (as on the Insured), the round Post Office date stamp.

NEVER SEND COINS OR ANYTHING OF VALUE BY CERTIFIED MAIL! This method offers no monetary protection whatsoever, and if lost, you cannot recover any part of the value. It is strictly a method to ensure a certain letter or parcel is delivered - nothing more. If it's not, you have no recourse.

RETURN RECEIPT: For a small additional fee (currently \$1), you may put a (green) Return Receipt Request card on the letter or package which, when returned, will be your confirmation that it was received. Who accepted it at the other end and the date delivered will also be included on the form when it is returned to you.

I thought the above information might be of value to the readers, especially those who don't mail out merchandise that needs protection too often. A little extra time spent on packaging and making sure the item is sent in the proper manner will save you a lot of headaches down the road, believe me!

THE WELL IS RUNNING DRY!

Articles from the general membership on hobo life styles; experiences you, your parents or your grandparents had with hoboes; and on any technical information that could be shared with the membership are needed. Should you need photographs for your articles, let us know and arrangements will be made to photograph your coin or memento. If you have a word processor, an ASCII or a WP file on either a 3.5" or 5.25" floppy will be appreciated.

Please send articles by September 7th to:

Donald "Sport" Farnsworth
OHNS Editor
PO Box 1051
Burlington, MA 01803



F-006

SUBJECT: Bearded man squatting on a pot (commode) on reverse

COIN DATE: 1935-D Good or About Good

CARVING DATE: Unknown, probably pre-1957

PROBABLE ARTIST: Unknown

ORIGINAL: (pre 1957)

QUALITY OF WORK: Superior

OWNER: Dave Wilson, (M #2)

COMMENTS: Sometimes known as a "Potty Nickel" or "Woodchopper on the Hopper", this falls into the "lewd" category as described in Del's second book. Artistically done, with some heavy buffing in evidence on the upper reverse. Coin itself is in Good or About Good condition, so this could be a more recent carving.

AUTHENTICATED BY: Bill Fivaz

DATE: December 13, 1993



F-013

SUBJECT: Bearded man with boller hat
COIN DATE: None
CARVING DATE: Unknown, EF coin
PROBABLE ARTIST: Unknown
ORIGINAL: (pre-1957)
QUALITY OF WORK: Above Average
OWNER: Roger E. "Twigg" Wollam (LM #12)

COMMENTS: This coin is interesting in that it has a "textured" hat and coat design, offering a "stippled" effect. It is both carved and punched (beard, eye), and is done on an EF coin. The hat band and ear are carved, as is the coat lapel and collar.

AUTHENTICATED BY: Bill Fivaz
DATE: January 15, 1994



F-014

SUBJECT: Bearded man in boller hat with bow; high collared coat.

COIN DATE: Not visable, but on a 1913-P (T-1).

CARVING DATE: Unknown

PROBABLE ARTIST: Unknown

ORIGINAL: Original pre-1957 or pre-1981 (Not indicated on authentication paper)

QUALITY OF WORK: Average

OWNER: Roger E. "Twigg" Wollam (LM #12)

COMMENTS: Typical subject of hobo artists; this man has a boller hat with a bow on it, and a very high collared coat, coming up to the jaw. The piece is totally carved, probably by knife, and there are highlighting scratches surrounding the portrait. Ethnic type nose.

AUTHENTICATED BY: Bill Fivaz

DATE: January 15, 1994

OHNS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

_____ Please enroll me as a member in the Original Hobo Nickel Society, Inc. as indicated.

_____ Please renew my membership (member number _____) as indicated.

_____ Regular (@\$10 per year) _____ Life (\$150) _____ Youth under 19 (\$5)

_____ I'm enclosing an additional \$12, please send me the club tee-shirt size _____

I am also enclosing a donation of _____ for the OHNS YN Scholarship program

NAME: _____ Moniker (Nickname): _____

ADDRESS: _____

I agree to abide by the Society's Code of Ethics.

Signature: _____

Make checks payable to: The Original Hobo Nickel Society

Please send to OHNS Attention: "Bo-ette," PO Box 43, Malvern, PA 19355

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BO TALES

The Newsletter of the...

ORIGINAL HOBO NICKEL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 1051

BURLINGTON, MA 01803-1051

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